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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASUNCION 000173

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: PARAGUAY TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS DEVELOPMENTS

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

1. (U) Summary:

--IADB project moving forward
--Japanese Embassy announces bilateral project
--NGO Luna Nueva finishes major TIP study
--More Paraguayan women rescued in Argentina and Spain
--Paraguay and Spain negotiating TIP agreement
--President considering decree to establish government-wide
TIP Commission

IADB project moving forward

2. (U) The Interamerican Development Bank released the final document announcing its USD 185,000 bilateral anti-TIP project with the GOP. The project has been in the planning stages for the past six months. The bulk of the funds will be dedicated to increasing awareness of the trafficking problem through a public education campaign and working with the Paraguayan media to increase coverage of TIP. Additionally, the project provides funds to the GOP to enhance its capacity to keep records and maintain statistics on TIP.

Japanese Embassy announces bilateral project

3. (U) The Embassy of Japan in Asuncion announced that the Japan Special Fund will provide USD 400,000 for an anti-trafficking program. The funds will be administered by the Interamerican Development Bank and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The program will be wide-ranging, incorporating training for prosecutors in the Attorney General's Office, training for teachers to permit them to recognize sexually exploited children in their classes, and projects with municipalities to enable neighborhood watch committees to identify trafficking attempts. The program will initiate in April and is scheduled to run for 24 months.

NGO Luna Nueva finishes major TIP study

4. (SBU) Luna Nueva, an Asuncion-based NGO that assists sexually abused women and children, will issue a major report on trafficking in persons during the first half of February. Luis Bogado Poisson, regional representative of the International Organization for Migration, told PolOff that the IOM contracted with Luna Nueva last year to carry out the study, which it will deliver to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The study will be wide-ranging, according to Bogado, identifying major trafficking routes and criminal groups involved with trafficking in Paraguay, and apparently implicates agents within the GOP in trafficking activities. Bogado also noted that the report is not to be released to the public (though Post will receive a copy of the report), as it will serve law enforcement purposes. Bogado added that the report will include statistics covering criminal investigations and prosecutions of TIP in Paraguay, but did not comment on the methodology that Luna Nueva used to compile them. He said that the report itself would provide such details.

More Paraguayan women rescued in Argentina and Spain

5. (U) During January, there were three significant rescues of Paraguayan women who had been trafficked into prostitution in Argentina and Spain. Two of the incidents were in the province surrounding Buenos Aires, with five women rescued in the first case and two in the other. The IOM paid for the women's return to their families in Paraguay. Luz Gamelia of the Secretariat for Repatriations told PolOff that one of the rescued women, a minor, claimed that her stepfather had sold her to a trafficker, but was unwilling to press charges against him. In the Spanish city of Valladolid, police freed nine women (one of whom was Paraguayan) from forced prostitution. Press reports indicate that the Paraguayan woman was expelled from Spain for entering illegally.

Paraguay and Spain negotiating TIP agreement

16. (U) Deputy Foreign Minister Jose Martinez Lezcano announced on January 20 that Paraguay is negotiating an agreement with Spain to cooperate on TIP. Martinez noted that the GOP is very concerned by the increasing numbers of Paraguayan women and children working in the sex trade in Spain, and cited several cases in which Paraguayan women have been trafficked to Spain with the promise of legitimate employment there. Carlo Arce, an official with the Interamerican Development Bank who consulted for the Foreign Ministry on the issue, told PolOff that the GOP seeks an agreement to include both cooperation between the two countries' judicial systems and expanded services for Paraguayan trafficking victims in Spain.

President considering decree to establish government-wide TIP Commission

17. (SBU) Kathya Bareiro of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the coordinator of the National Anti-Trafficking Action Plan, told PolOff that the Interagency Roundtable on Trafficking in Persons has sent President Duarte a draft executive order creating a national commission on TIP. The draft order includes establishment of a permanent database on trafficking prosecutions, officially mandates the national 911 telephone system to receive trafficking complaints, and instructs GOP ministries to cooperate with foreign government and international organizations on TIP. The order will charge the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with coordinating anti-TIP efforts across ministries.
JOHNSON